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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PING, GR
SUBJ: KING CONSTANTINE'S LONDON PRESS CONFERENCE AND
ANTI-MONARCHY STATEMENT ON GREEK TV SHARE
HEADLINES IN ATHENS PRESS

1. KING CONSTANTINE'S PRESS CONFERENCE WITHGREEK NEWSMEN
IN LONDON NOVEMBER 28 GIVEN PROMINENT TREATMENT GREEK PRESS
FOLLOWING DAY. CHIEF ELEMENTS HIS REMARKS FOLLOW.
A. IF GREEK ELECTORATE SUPPORTS MONARCHY HE WILL
COMPLY "ABSOLUTELY" WITH DECISIONS OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING
HIS PREROGATIVES. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "INSTITUTIONS ARE
EVOLVING" AND HE CONSIDERS IT INDISPENSABLE THAT KING'S
PREROGATIVES BE DEFINED ABSOLUTELY AND EXCLUSIVELY BY
REPRESENTATIVES OF GREEK PEOPLE.
B. KING DISCOUNTED AS "PURE FICTION" PRESS REPORTS
THAT SHAH OF IRAN HAD OFFERED FUNDING FOR PRO-MONARCHIST
CAMPAIGN IN GREECE. "NOT EVEN A PENNY HAS COME FROM THE
SHAH."
C. WHEN ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF HIS MOTHER'S
RETURN TO GREECE SHOULD MONARCHY BE RESTORED,
CONSTANTINE STATED "SHE WISHES TO CREATE PROBLEMS NEITHER
FOR COUNTRY NOR FOR FAMILY," ADDING SHE DID NOT INTEND TO
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RETURN TO GREECE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CERTAIN "BAD

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IMPRESSIONS" HAD BEEN CREATED IN PAST CONCERNING ROLE OF HIS MOTHER BUT "ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT A SON TO RENOUNCE HIS MOTHER."
D. CONCERNING 1965 POLITICAL CRISIS, CONSTANTINE ADMITTED THAT ERRORS WERE COMMITTED BY HIMSELF, VARIOUS POLITICIANS AND "MANY SIDES" AT THAT TIME.
E. CONCERNING CYPRUS, HE ASSERTED THAT QUESTIONS CONCERNING FOREIGN POLICY FALL UNDER "THE GOVERNMENT'S COMPETENCE" AND THAT THE ONLY THING HE CAN DO IS TO "ACCEPT THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTOR."
F. WHEN PRESSED FOR HIS OPINION ON ALLEGED AMERICAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE 1967 COUP, CONSTANTINE DECLARED HE COULD NOT ANSWER SUCH A QUESTION SINCE HE LACKED THE NECESSARY CONCRETE EVIDENCE. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT "PIRACY, A CRIME, AND AN ACT OF FRAUD TOOK PLACE ON APRIL 21, 1967." IN RESPONSE TO A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION WHETHER HE HAD SIGNED DECREES AFTER THE APRIL 1967 MILITARY TAKE-OVER WHICH ABOLISHED FREEDOMS OF THE GREEK PEOPLE, HE STATED THAT HE REFUSED TO SIGN DECREES ABOLISHING CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLES WHEN THEY WERE PRESENTED TO HIM. HE FLATLY STATED THAT NO SUCH DECREE BEARING HIS SIGNATURE EXISTED.
G. QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS ROLE OPPOSING MILITARY REGIME WHILE IN EXILE, HE STATED HE REPEATEDLY SPOKE ON FOREIGN TV AND RADIO, CITING DEUTSCHE WELLE, BBC AND RADIO PARIS AS EXAMPLES OF BROADCASTS AIMED AT "INFORMING WORLD OPINION ON DRAMA OF GREECE." TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE EXPENSES OF A MONARCHY AND HIS OWN PERSONAL HOLDINGS, CONSTANTINE STATED THAT "WHEN HE RETURNS TO GREECE, THERE MUST BE GREAT FRUGALITY."

2. IN PREARRANGED APPERANCE OVER GREEK TV EVENING NOVEMBER 28, MARIOS PLORITES OPPOSED RETURN OF KING. PLORITES IS A JOURNALIST, WRITER AND THEATRICAL CRITIC WHO APPEARED AS SPOKESMAN OF CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES IN OPPOSING KING'S RETURN. PLORITIES ARGUED THAT GREEK ELECTORATE MUST NOT MAKE MISTAKE IN CHOICE BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND KING. HE STRESSED THAT WHILE A PRESIDENT CAN ALWAYS BE REPLACED PEACEFULLY THROUGH THE BALLOT, A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MONARCHY CAN ONLY BE REPLACED BY "SHEER FORCE, A REVOLUTION." REFERRING TO INITIAL ADDRESS OF KING TO GREEK PEOPLE OVER GREEK TV TWO DAYS PREVIOUSLY (ATHENS 8498) PLORITES CATEGORIZED KING'S REMARKS AT THAT TIME AS "SHOWING CONTEMPT FOR THE JUDGMENT AND MEMORY OF GREEK PEOPLE." PLORITES REMINDED TV AUDIENCE THAT NINE YEARS AGO THAT VERY SAME CONSTANTINE HAD "TRAMPLED ON POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY" AND FORCED LEGAL PRIME MINISTER OF

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COUNTRY TO RESIGN. HE DISCOUNTED CONSTANTINE'S PLEDGE TO RESTORE "NATIONAL UNITY." PLORITES ALSO ALLEGED THAT CONSTANTINE HAD "PRAISED THE INSTIGATORS OF APRIL, 1967 COUP" AND HAD TOLD THEM "YOU DID WELL--WHAT YOU DID WILL SAVE THE COUNTRY."

3. POINTING TO CONSTANTINE'S CLAIM THAT SINCE HIS EXCAPE FROM GREECE HE NEVER CEASED TO STRUGGLE FOR HIS COUNTRY'S LIBERATION, PLORITES ALLEGED HE HAD IN FACT SENT CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PAPADOPOULOS WHEN ASSASSINATION PLOT (1968) AGAINST HIM FAILED.
PLORITES ALSO ALLEGED CONSTANTINE HAD CONDEMNED GREEK NAVY MUTINY OF 1973.
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